The Daily Movie Magazine

CLOSE-UPS of the MOVIE GAME

By HENRY M. NEELY

Why Aren't You Going to the Movies Nowadays?

DO YOU know that there are more than fifty moving-picture theatres here closed now for the first time since they were built? Do you know that because of this slack business exhibitors are not booking films and that, as a consequence, companies have either cut down or altogether abandoned production?

And further, there is the inevitable tragic consequence—thousands of hard-working motion-picture people are out of jobs. They are facing the wolf and the frowning landlord; they are finding sympathy in the dictionary—but nowhere else.

And it is all because YOU are not going to the movies as you used to.

Do you know that you have put the whole industry up against a problem that even the best brains in it are unable to solve? Why are you deserting your favorite form of amusement? That's what the industry wants to know.

And they can't find out unless you tell them. Perhaps you never realized that you yourself are such an important figure in the fourth largest business in the world. But you are. You are the very backbone of it; they may flesh it as they please, but, if the backbone is crooked, the whole thing is going to be crooked.

• • •

BOMBARD your moving-picture house manager with postals and letters. Do you think that would be bothering him? On the contrary, it would be the best thing in the world for his own business and for the industry generally if one-quarter of the fans in the country should form the habit of writing him once a week and telling him just what they think of everything.

• • •

I'VE been talking to people in all branches of the game lately, trying to get at the reason for the slump. And there is no unanimity of opinion. If you and all your fan friends had formed the habit of writing regularly to your home house manager, it would give the folks who produce pictures a definite idea of what is wrong and they could correct it.

"Nobody is spending money," said one man. "They haven't got it. They are out of work."

"It's the abnormal hot weather of June," said another. "You couldn't get people out of their houses, where they could take off their coats and collars and be fairly comfortable."

"It's this daylight-saving time," said a third. "People won't go into theatres while it's still daylight. And nowadays when it's dark enough to go to the theatre it's late enough to go to bed."

• • •

SO THERE you are. It's one thing or the other. But which is it? And how is the house manager to know unless you write to him and tell him why you don't go? Just a postal card with a few words. He hasn't time to read a four-page letter. But he wants to know.

• • •

THERE'S another thing about this letter-writing habit. It would make a board of censors unnecessary. It would free you from the present Salem-witchcraft-period method of letting some one man, with all of his own personal and illogical prejudices, decide what picture you shall see and what you shall not. We all have our little prejudices, you know. And censors get deeper and deeper into their own until they make sweeping rules that no one may break and that have no more logic in them than censorship itself.

If you and the other fans had only formed the postal-writing habit years ago, you would be the censors. You could tell house managers in unmistakable terms just what you want your family to see on the screen and what you don't.

For the theatres belong to you. If it were not for you, they would not be built. If it were not for you, they could not be run and pictures could not be produced.

During this last summer you have ordered these theatres to close. But you have given no reason. Don't you think you ought to? We are all waiting to find out what you want or what we have done that wasn't satisfactory.

Write to your local house manager. He's the listening post of the industry. He'll forward the message direct to headquarters and the next campaign will be planned according to your orders.

And you can relieve yourself of the straitjacket thing they call censorship, too.

• • •

I'VE had a lot of people ask me lately to write an article on what I think about censorship in general. So I went to the Boss and put it up to him. "Well," he said, "what do you think about censorship?" So I told him. He listened. Then he shook his head. "No," he said, "this is a family paper. We can't print that kind of language." So you'll never know whether I favor it or not.

INFANT INDUSTRY HAS AN UNUSUAL LIFE HISTORY

IN 1899 Ed Proter, as cameraman, scenario writer and director, produced the first "feature motion picture" that America has ever known—"The Life of an American Fireman."

This feature had the first close-up, the first double exposure and the first switch-back ever shown in this country. This, despite the claim of David W. Griffith that he introduced the long-shot, the close-up and the switch-back to the screen.

The first moving-picture studios were on roofs of New York office buildings. "The Life of an American Fireman" was made on the roof of No. 41 East Twenty-first street, and at the same time Biograph opened its first studio on the roof of the building at Thirteenth street and Broadway, near Union Square.

• • •

THE earliest picture machines were called the Fantoscope, Kinetoscope and Edison's Vitascope. The Eden Musee ran moving pictures as an outstanding feature, while Koster & Bial's Music Hall had pictures as a special attraction in its vaudeville bill. Lumier's Cinematograph was the first foreign machine to show pictures in this country, exhibiting at Keith's Union Square.

Wallace McCutcheon, Sr., was the first director, hired and paid as such. Roy McCardell was the first salaried scenario writer. These men started the production of Biograph pictures on the roof studio, near Union Square.

In 1898 Commodore J. Stuart Blackton (he was not a "Commodore" then) and Albert Smith, with "Pop" Rock, were establishing Vitagraph with offices in Nassau street and their studio on the roof. They were doing "one-reelers."

• • •

FEATURE pictures, with titles that indicate the "thrills" involved, were in the doldrums after "The Life of an American Fireman," but when, four years later, they began to evolve, they developed "The Great American Train Robbery," "The Moonshiner," "The Life of a Yeggman" and "The Kleptomaniac." These features were of the class of 1903.

David Wark Griffith made his first appearance on the screen in "Eagle's Nest," an Edison-made version of Edwin Arden's stage drama that was current just preceding 1907, when Griffith turned from acting in the spoken drama to become leading man on the screen. Later Griffith wrote scenarios and finally got a start as director, under Wallace McCutcheon, at Biograph. One day McCutcheon was ill, and then and there came Griffith's opportunity.

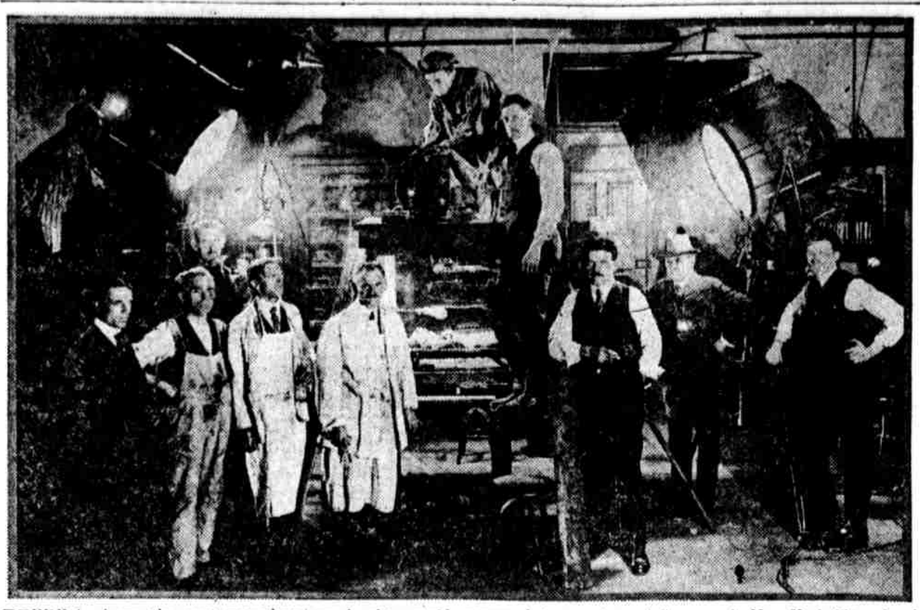
• • •

PRIOR to 1906 the only firms making pictures were Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph, Lubin and Selig. In those days salaries of players and every one else concerned in picture making were on the daily basis.

The lead got $5 a day, when he or she worked, and the extras, who appeared chiefly in chase scenes, got $1 a day. If a picture cost over $500 there was an upheaval in the organization.

Sigmund Lubin, in his Philadelphia plant, made the first battle scene. He dressed thirty or forty men in uniforms and showed battle scenes of the Spanish-American War. The "soldiers" got a dollar a day.

PHOTOGRAPHING, IN MOTION, BEAT OF THE HEART



HERE is shown the most marvelous use to which a motion-picture camera has ever been put—the Novagraph ultra-rapid camera being made ready to photograph the beating of a dog's heart at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. Leading surgeons believe the movies may yet solve some of their baffling problems.

The LOVE STORY of a MOVIE STAR

CHAPTER XXVI

BUT I was not dropped, after all. Almost I wished that I had been, for Roland had no further use for me.

But a Mr. Clay, a feeble and gentle man, one of the directors, allowed me to play trifling parts—mere "super" work—for which I drew about two dollars a day. Black days, those! So near to Roland, so far away from him! Never further than then!

May 30.

I hardly know how it came about, but some months later, Roland began to notice me again. He would stop and nod and smile; he would pause to ask me how I was getting along. Besides, my acting was beginning to improve, and Mr. Clay was warm in my defense. Finally, Mr. Clay gave me a fairly good part, and I carried it off with spirit. The vote was the highest of the evening. The manager himself congratulated me. And Roland stopped me in the hall to shake hands and commend me.

"There!" he said. "Now, you're showing yourself!"

The following week, he cast me for a good part in one of his own films, and soon I was working for him regularly.

His whole attitude changed, and I was made aware that he was falling in love with me. But I see now what infinite tact he used, how carefully he worked, with what restraint and patience he made his advances. I have a shrewd suspicion that he never could forget that I had almost murdered Beaver-Face.

During the autumn we had several little confidences. He loved to talk his plans over with me; to sit in his office and "dope out" coming plays, and I was always eager and proud to help him.

And then, one Saturday he asked me if I would walk along the cliffs of the Hudson with him on Sunday afternoon. I was overjoyed. I met him at the ferry, and we went across the river. We climbed the long hill; we passed down the leaf-carpeted paths in the autumn woodland. Now and then the bold sky looked in from the East, and we had a glimpse of New York, shining on its hills, a white city over the waters. And we went on, near each other, wandering slowly, lost in a sweetness of intimacy and low-voiced talk.

He went over his next week's plans in some detail. He seemed heavens away from love-making—until we came to a little pond among the turning leaves, and the falling leaves, and the leaves that had fallen.

One old maple leaned over that pool, and he paused beside it, and poked up dead leaves with his cane. I called his attention to the beauty of the pool, sky-still under trees and skies, deep with the colors of the woodland, hushed as a mind at peace, that reflects and holds the world.

"Yes," he murmured, "if only our minds, our hearts could be like that!"

The poetry of this thrilled me. He towered above me, in one human shape, all I adored, all I reverenced! He was my faith in life. I believed now in life and in love, because I believed in him. I stood trembling. The woods were very quiet; we seemed lost in a far wilderness, where no city marched, and there was no care, no toil, no bitterness. Softly the leaves fell upon us. A few birds fluted. The pool lay still.

"Nella!" he said—and the very sound of his voice stabbed me! "Nella! It seems years since I wanted to say something to you."

I turned a little toward him. He turned and looked at me. I could not bear his eyes, and glanced down. Then he reached and took my hands, dropping his cane.

"You don't know how beautiful you are—and how wonderful! Nella—Darling!" He drew me a little closer, and my eyes went blind. I searched for his face, and stroked it gently. Fear had left me. Suddenly, and with a cry, he drew me close, crushed me to him, and through my lips went a sigh of all the sweetness and poignancy of life!

"Nella—this is love—I never knew it before—my heart and soul are lost—Nella!"

I felt his arm around my shoulder; he had one of my hands in his; my face lifted; and closer we drew—and we kissed.

Later, on the way home, he said we were engaged to be married.

I weep now to think how happy I was! Oh, Roland! Roland! How could you throw away heaven and earth as you did?

May 31st. Dawn.

I have not slept a wink since I wrote those last words a little after midnight. For hours, now, I have lived back in those days of wonder, those days of rapture.

Four days in heaven—and then the sudden end!

I was sitting alone in my little dressing-room, almost ready to go on. I really looked radiant that day; I remember even the dress with distinctiveness. It was a pale-gray and pale-pink satin, gorgeous with rich embroidery. Around my neck was a long string of Oriental beads. My hair was entwined with flowers. I felt like a young queen.

Suddenly, some one knocked.

"Enter," I said, playing the queen.

The door opened slowly and a young woman looked in.

At first I did not recognize her; but after a second, there was no mistaking her. I had seen that pretty, doll-faced blonde before. But where?

I rose automatically, a curious dull ache in my heart. She came on into the room with slow deliberation, and shut the door behind her.

"You don't remember me?" she asked in a cold, hard voice.

Suddenly I felt a difficulty in breathing; why, I could not have told.

"I don't—quite," I murmured.

"Alma Audrey!" She gave a toss of her head, and calmly sat down in the chair opposite mine. Then she leaned a hand on my dressing-table and "took me in" with a hostile and critical glance.

To be continued tomorrow

This Is How the Story Begins:

NELLA MORELAND, most famous of screen stars, hears that a young girl, Annette Wilkinson, has fallen in love with Roland Welles, an idol of the screen. Miss Moreland, to save Annette, writes the story of her own tragic love affair with Welles, intending to send it to Annette so she may know the kind of man he is.

She tells how, while a pianist in a movie theatre in a Western Pennsylvania town, she met Welles when he made a "personal appearance" there, how he invited her to come to New York and said he would place her in the movies, how she came and the chilly reception which he gave her in the studio. Then, becoming interested in her, he gets her a job in a small town stock company for the experience, promising to see her often.

Kitty, a member of the company, proves her best friend, but the manager, whom she nicknames "Beaver Face," becomes obnoxious with his attentions. She threatens him with a revolver, leaves the company and goes to New York to find work.

Now Go On With the Story

FOR YOUR SCRAPBOOK OF STARS

DOROTHY PHILLIPS

"HOKUM" IS JAZZ OF SCREEN BUT— PUBLIC WANTS IT

By MARSHALL NEILAN

WHAT jazz is to modern dance music, hokum is to the motion-picture production of today.

The persons among the motion-picture devotees who do not enjoy hokum on the screen just about equal the number of persons who go to our modern dancing pavilion and do not dance to jazz music.

The dance orchestra, catering to the great popular demand of the public, plays an occasional old-fashioned waltz to satisfy a few, but it plays jazz all the rest of the evening to satisfy the multitude.

The director occasionally produces what he likes to call an example of dramatic art, but he usually fills his picture with hokum to win public approval—whether he admits it or not.

What is hokum? Opinions vary. When the most popular star of them all slides down a coal chute and appears in the cellar besmirched with coal dust—that's hokum.

When Wesley Barry appears as a kitchen bandit and holds up the cook for her pies at the point of his gun—that's hokum.

And when the hero leaps from the top of a moving train on to the ladder of an airplane flying overhead—that's hokum.

When a comedian throws a pie and hits another in the face—that's slapstick. When a big woman kicks a little man in the seat of his trousers—that's slapstick. And when a man with a ladder on his shoulder swings around and hits another man in the face with the ladder—that's slapstick.

• • •

ARTISTIC drama will be found among the motion-picture material that does not fit in with the above types of entertainment.

The writer, not by way of compliment, he assures you, has been termed the hokum king of them all. Although as he states, he has not been so termed in a complimentry manner, he nevertheless unblushingly accepts it as such.

The most successful motion-picture producers of today are the men and women who are most sensitive to the desire of the public.

The most unsuccessful producers are those who go blindly ahead, placing their own ideals foremost, regardless of the popular public taste.

The fact that a producer is ten years ahead of the public is no more excuse for failure than is the fact that he is ten years behind the times.

Those who scoff at hokum—which happens to be the public taste—are in the same class as the persons who still ride in hansom cabs instead of using taxis. The critics who turn up their noses and leave the theatre with the remark "hokum" when all the others in the audience applaud and leave the theatre with a happy smile are in the same boat with the persons who go to a modern dance and wait for the old-fashioned waltz.

• • •

NO PERSON or group of persons can dictate what the public shall have in spite of what they want. The individual who attempts this stand—and there are quite a few—finds himself in the same position as the salesman who endeavors to sell fur coats to the South Sea Islanders.

It is foolish to soar to lofty heights that are beyond the average theatre-goer just because the producer is anxious to register how 'artistic' he can be. Art must be commercial or it will not pay. The business of starving to death for art's sake makes good reading, but leaves nothing to one's heirs.

The producer, critic or theatre-goer who travels the lonely road—no matter how beautiful it may appear to him—will find he will have to enjoy what he considers beautiful by himself. The producer who travels the road of hokum, where the public crowds itself in its search for entertainment, will find his work most profitable.

It would be a mistake for every producer to devote his entire efforts to the propagation of hokum on the screen. Just because hokum is popular it does not follow that a film with nothing else but hokum would be a riot. There must be a contrast to offset the hokum—just as there must be a crust around the pie.

For once I have declared myself. If the charge that I am hokum is true, all I can say—with apologies to K. C. B.—is—

I thank you!

From $15 Per to Millions

MARSHALL ("MICKEY") NEILAN

CHARACTER MASKS A BIG FACTOR IN NEW PRODUCTIONS

ONE of the most interesting announcements made in some time regarding motion pictures is the news that masks have made their bow before the camera. Not the ordinary motionless mask that has been in vogue of late, but a pliable mask capable of expressing all the emotions, the invention of Alex Hall, artist and sculptor.

After many years of experimental tests, the new type of mask was found practicable and is making its debut in pictures via the novelty route for the time being. The Mystic Masque productions, recently formed, has started shooting on the first of a series of novelties in which the masks will play an important part.

Nate Gatzert, formerly manager of production for the Haworth Studios and the Hayakawa Feature Play Co., is supervising the productions of the new organization. They will film their stories at the old Griffith Studios, where they have installed a laboratory for the making of the masks.

• • •

THE possibilities of the new contortionable masks were first realized when Hall introduced them in "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." They were seen in the allegorical figures of Conquest, War, Pestilence and Death, and caused wide comment because of their grotesqueness and power of expression.

There were few who were not only puzzled by the hideousness of these masks, but still further mystified when they found these figures capable of moving their faces and expressing their emotions.

The most difficult problem which confronted Mr. Hall was the composition of the substance used in making the masks contortionable, and still have them retain their original lines and form. While the Benda and Rossi masks have made a sensation on the speaking stage, being worn chiefly by dancers, they are immobile, whereas the Hall masks show the expression and muscular movement of the wearer.

With the introduction of masks the producers will bring to the screen a famous character, Old King Cole, and the first of the series of novelties will be named in his honor.

First Stage Play to Be Screened Without Cut

NORMA TALMADGE'S screen production of "The Sign on the Door" has the unique distinction of being perhaps the first stage play which has ever gone to the screen without a change. Director Herbert Brenon followed Channing Pollock's stage play scene for scene and situation for situation.

For months the story of "The Sign on the Door" was in the scenario department of one of the foremost film companies, and was returned to Mr. Pollock with a note that it was not suited for screen production. However, when the play had been successfully produced on Broadway a representative of the company, along with many others, tried desperately to obtain the film rights, but Joseph M. Schenck had already grabbed them.

LEGION IN WEST THINK ART ACORD CAN LICK DEMPSEY

By CONSTANCE PALMER
Hollywood, Calif.

THE American Legion has asked Art Acord, a cowboy motion-picture actor with an enviable war record, to meet Jack Dempsey—not only to meet him, but to whip the tar out of him.

They give Mr. Acord's measurements with gusto: Six feet one, 187 pounds, has a seventy-two-inch reach, a forty-two-inch chest, and a seventeen-inch neck.

I don't know much about it, but just from looking at Art I would say he is promising. And I must say the fact that the American Legion is coming so definitely to the fore regarding Mr. Dempsey is very commendable. More power to 'em!

Agnes Ayres is back from New York, looking lovelier than ever. She is trying to look unconcerned—if you only knew how Agnes does it!—while she is waiting for the powers that be to decide on the new story which will be her first starring venture.

Mabel Normand must be a wonderful woman. I have never met her, but here's what some one who knows her well told me yesterday:

They said she reads everything—literally—Neitzsche, Gorky, Ibsen. I thought when I first heard it that it was a press agent's imagination. But the person I talked to is essentially truthful, and there was no reason for him to spoof me.

If she speaks of a book you haven't read—and it is extremely probable you haven't—in two or three days Miss Normand will send it to you, with the best passages marked. If a woman admires a hat or sweater Miss Normand wears, within the shortest possible time a package will arrive at the admirer's home, accompanied by a sweet note from the donor asking acceptance of the gift.

No wonder she's popular! Of course, she can't give hats and books to her audiences, but she gives them the love and affection she feels for all humankind.

• • •

YESTERDAY I visited Mary Pickford's set for "Little Lord Fauntleroy." Besides the principals there were about forty people working, all dressed in the style of twenty years ago.

You have no idea, you young ones (listen at me!), how utterly charming the costumes were. They seemed to bring out all the womanliness and beauty there is—and, strange to say, none of them looked like "extras"—that is, fifteen feet away!

Miss Pickford is so tiny and so brilliant that the moment she entered the set every one knew it. Under those yellow curls there functions an extraordinary brain. Her voice is rather peculiar—high and penetrating. She seems nervous and very alive—bless her dear heart!

Brother Jack is helping nice Al Green direct the picture. The former is a rather quiet young man, watching things with amused and contemplative eyes. I like him. Al Green is always jolly—having what we term a "wise crack" for every situation, no matter how serious or how rushed the company is. It sort of keeps up the old morale.

Director Terriss Thought to Be Acting When Ill

TOM TERRISS, directing "Find the Woman," took a mob of 200 people to the Ambassador Hotel yesterday to film scenes of an "Italian garden." He was standing at the top of a flight of stairs giving his directions, when he stumbled and fell to the bottom. At first some of the inexperienced players thought he was giving an imitation of what he wanted them to do, but upon investigation they discovered Mr. Terriss had been overcome by the heat. He was bruised and cut from the fall, and although he gamely insisted after he regained consciousness on going on with his work, he was removed to his home and a physician called to attend him. He expects to be back on the job in a few days.

HUBBY WORKS IN WIFIE'S MOVIE

Marion Fairfax, noted producer, and Tully Marshall, her husband, who plays a big part in her picture, "The Lying Truth"

What Your Favorite Film Stars Are Doing

William Collier, Jr., who has been appearing in pictures on the West Coast for some time past, is back in New York.

Priscilla Dean has gone to British Columbia, where Stuart Paton will film the concluding scenes for "Conflict."

Wilfred Buckland will act as art director for "Omar the Tentmaker," which Richard Walton Tully is to make.

Webster Cullison, who has a series of Philo Grubb comedies now in production, is understood to be making arrangements to add three new units. These units will produce western dramas, comedy dramas and educationals. Cullison is making arrangements for space at the Francis Ford studios.

Kenneth Harlan has been engaged to play the lead in "The Barricade" which W. Christy Cabanne is to make for Robertson-Cole. Work starts on Monday at the Victor studio.

Eve Unsell has left for Los Angeles to assume the helm at the R-C Pictures scenario department. She will take with her Zara Mandell and Garrett Elsden Fort. George Blaisdell will be associated with Paul Price, title writer.

Frank Mayo has begun production at Universal City on "The Reverend Meddler." Lillian Rich appears in the leading feminine role. William Worthington is directing.

A new producing unit called the Grover Jones Production has been formed here to make a series of five-reel westerns. The first is now under way with Ora Carew and Jack Richardson in the cast.

Tom Mix's next picture will be "After Your Own Heart," which he finished just before making his recent trip East. He wrote the story also.

Extra Player Causes Accident in Test

JOHN B. HYLAND, assistant director of the Hope Hampton productions, is in Flower Hospital, New York, with a broken pelvis as a result of an accident last Monday, when he was engaged in hiring extras to take part in a train wreck scene in the picturization of Fanny Hirst's story, "Star Dust."

Mr. Hyland was interviewing several prospective members of the cast in an office on the first floor of the Gayety Theatre Building, on Broadway. The weather was warm and the window was open. While one of the extras was demonstrating how he would act in the train wreck Mr. Hyland backed away from him, tripped over a brief case and fell through the open window to the street, breaking his pelvis bone.

He was rushed to Flower Hospital, where it is said he will have to remain for five or six weeks. Plans for the train wreck were temporarily delayed by the accident, because Mr. Hyland had complete charge of the arrangements.

Hobart Henley, who is directing Hope Hampton in "Star Dust," announces, however, that the wreck will be staged not later than the end of this month. The neighborhood of Dayton, O., has been selected as the scene for the "catastrophe." It is planned to have two modern passenger trains meet in a head-on collision on a railroad bridge.

Director and Wife Europe-Bound

Mr. and Mrs. George Fitzmaurice are arranging to sail July 26 on the Aquitania. Mr. Fitzmaurice has virtually finished "Peter Ibbetson," with the exception of cutting and assembling the picture, and Mrs. Fitzmaurice has sworn off writing until she reaches London, so everything is set for their foreign invasion, and they are prepared to enjoy their stay abroad.